

Revised Ecosystem Roundtable Approach
December 23, 1997 Revised Draft

The Ecosystem Roundtable and CALFED managers have agreed to revise the Roundtable's 1998 process for developing near-term spending recommendations in order to achieve the following purposes:

- A. Get back to the notion of a "virtual pool" of money.
- B. Expand the categories for spending beyond a request for proposals process to include program development, reserve funds, agency programs and other types of spending vehicles.
- C. Clarify that spending will be guided by an action plan that is (1) based on the best available science and (2) coordinated with other on-going ecosystem restoration efforts.

The revised process encompasses the following six steps and sub-steps.

1. **Assume a total amount of funding**

The Roundtable has initially chosen a three year planning period. It should assume a certain amount of total funds expected (roughly) to be available during that time.

2. **Convene a Blue Ribbon scientific panel to prepare a summary technical report**

The scientific panel will prepare a report for the use of the Roundtable and CALFED managers that summarizes the current status of the ERPP, AFRP and other key ecosystem restoration planning efforts with regard to the primary problems facing the Bay-Delta system and objectives for long-term action.

3. **Prepare an Action Plan to guide spending in the near-term Action Plan comments:**

The Action Plan will include a broad array of activities geared toward addressing the ecological problems identified by the technical report. The Action Plan will be a mix of science and policy. For example, if the science indicates that the altered hydrodynamics of the Delta is a problem, there are a variety of policy calls that can be made as to how to best address this need--long-term water acquisitions, changes in annual operations, replacement of diversion works with more efficient systems, etc.

The Action Plan will include 5-8 categories of spending including, for example:

- request for proposals for specific actions
- actions best undertaken by federal, state or local agencies
- program development (when the best response to an identified need has not yet been developed sufficiently to support either agency action or a request for proposals)

- reserve funds for various purpose
- long-term endowment
- other

Steps in Preparing Action Plan

- Roundtable members/CALFED agencies review technical report*
- Break into workgroups and brainstorm on the problem areas*

Workgroups to be a mix of Roundtable members, technical advisors, agency representatives and perhaps others.

The purpose of these working groups is to develop an initial set of action items to address the identified ecological problems. The groups should be encouraged to think very broadly about actions; everything from very specific recommendations (e.g. replace a specific dam on a specific creek with a more "fish friendly" diversion method) to very broad programmatic needs (e.g. someone should develop a plan to acquire water, protect the pristine habitat in the upper watersheds).

The workgroups could be based on geographic regions, type of problem, species or any other logical division.

Each workgroup would produce a set of written actions (not proposals) deemed necessary or useful in addressing the problem the group was assigned to think about.

- The Stakeholders (Roundtable) prepare a Draft Action Plan based on the workgroup products*

The Roundtable would hold a two to four day facilitated workshop to bring together the recommendations of the smaller groups and attempt to fashion a near-term spending plan. THIS PLAN WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE SELECTION OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS FOR FUNDING. It would represent a first cut at:

- (1) identifying the types of actions that should be prioritized for the near-term*
- (2) the appropriate funding vehicle (RFP, directed program, reserve account, etc.)*
- (3) recommendations on broad policy issues (for example, the stakeholders may want to prioritize spending on actions that cannot be implemented in the near-term but would benefit from immediate financial support, alternatively they could make the policy call to favor projects immediately implementable).*

To be effective and meaningful, such a workshop would require substantial preparation in terms of focusing the issues, identifying discussion points and probable areas of consensus as well as conflict.

The draft Action Plan would be written following the workshop, to the extent that the stakeholders are unable to reach agreement on various important points, the draft should identify the range of views presented.

d. *CALFED Agencies feedback loop*

In conjunction with the Bay-Delta Program, the CALFED agencies would review the stakeholder draft and revise it.

e. *Additional feedback loops until the Action Plan is integrated*

f. *Release Action Plan for public review and comment (Note: The Action Plan will have greater credibility if conflict of interest rules apply to every stage of its development. This would mean no individual or organization with a financial interest in the funds intended for expenditure would participate in the preparation of the Action Plan.*

4. **Match the available pots of money with the proposed spending items**

This could be done by the Roundtable, or it could be accomplished by a subgroup of stakeholders and agency representatives, in the form of recommendations to the agencies with legal responsibility for funding. (This could be a section of the blueprint, or a separate document entirely.)

5. **Implement the recommended spending plan**

Responsibility for this task will depend upon the action item, but implementation responsibility (e.g. getting RFPs issued and processed) will necessarily lie primarily with the parties with legal responsibility for individual funding sources. However, the Roundtable (or subgroups or the Roundtable) should serve as the stake holder liaison to, and monitor of, these processes. To the extent that non-agency funding is at issue (e.g. stakeholder contributions to Category III) the Roundtable has substantially more latitude in guiding the spending process unless they would like credit from CALFED for the funds.

6. **Adaptive management/program monitoring, reporting, etc.**

The Roundtable should track (a) how well its recommendations are actually implemented by CALFED and the other agencies and (b) how the various programs and projects are doing in terms of providing ecosystem benefits and information.

Appendix A - Steps in Preparing Action Plan

Using revised priorities, types of actions to be implemented annually in each ecoregion need to be prioritized. Many of these actions have already been discussed in planning efforts such as CVPIA, AFRP and the draft ERPP. Regional workgroups, using existing information including the ERPP and AFRP will develop prioritized list of action to be implemented annually. Information developed by each workgroup would be summarized using a standard format and terminology consistent with the ERPP.

a: Provide advance materials to all workgroup participants on priorities and planning documents including exciting data on ongoing activities and revised priorities.

b: Conduct 4 regional facilitated meetings. The purpose of the meetings would be to identify priorities for the next year, given the existing and ongoing regional programs. The morning session would consist of regional technical experts. The afternoon session would include Roundtable members and be open to the public. These meetings would be co-convened with Regional programs where possible. Participants who are considering applying for funding need to note such.

Meetings will be conducted in the following regions:

Lower American River/Sacramento River and tributaries - with SB 1086 Program
San Joaquin River and tributaries - with San Joaquin River Management Program
Delta, Suisun Marsh, and east-side tributaries
North Bay

Also coordinate with CALFED Water Quality Technical Team and Interim Interagency Watershed Advisory teams, the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, and the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture.

c: Summarize recommendations of each regional meeting and develop an overall Action Plan.

Time frame: August to September.

Potential Meeting Dates:

July 21 - SJRMP

August 6

August 18 - SB 1086

August 27